

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN REYNOLDS 5th NOVEMBER

BE BRIGHT, BE SEEN THIS WINTER

With the clocks gone back and darker afternoons coming Road Safety Officers are urging all road users to take extra care to ensure they can be seen when they are out and about. The change in the clocks means it will be darker when many people are on their way home from school or work, and the County Council team are backing the THINK! Road Safety campaign.

The THINK! Campaign advice includes:

- * Bright or fluorescent clothes show up best by day, but at night wear reflective material which shows up in car headlights
- * Reflective badges, stickers or tape can be put on school bags, clothing or equipment during winter months
- * Always ensure bicycle lights are in good condition and switched on
- * Take extra time when crossing the road to check the traffic and always use the Green Cross Code - Stop, Look and Listen.

Primary schools around Cambridgeshire have already been sent 'Be Bright Be Seen' posters to alert students to the increased danger on the road during the winter. Drivers are urged to take extra care, to be extra cautious and look out for pedestrians and cyclists; always ensure their lights are working properly and windows are clean and clear.

GRITTERS READY TO ROLL IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridgeshire County Council's gritting teams are geared up and ready to go for the winter season - whatever the weather brings. A fleet of 39 specialist gritters - four of them newly acquired for this season - and their team of around 100 highly trained drivers - are ready to hit the road loaded with some of the 10,000 plus tonnes of salt which is stockpiled at depots around the county. Gritting runs are triggered automatically by sophisticated weather monitoring equipment which alerts Highways chiefs when temperatures are expected to fall below freezing - on some occasions the fleet will carry out as many as three runs within a 24 hour period when weather conditions and temperatures are particularly bad.

In addition specialist brine spraying equipment mounted on two four-wheel drive quad bikes will again be available to treat harder to reach foot and cycle paths in Cambridge and backpack sprayers will be used to 'spot' treat other areas as necessary, including 11 foot and cycle bridges in Cambridge. Salt bins, which are kept stocked by the County Council, are also available to local parishes and the county council works in partnership with the district councils to try to ensure maximum treatment of winter-weather affected areas.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "We have done everything we can within the resources available to us to ensure we are as prepared as possible for the winter weather - whenever it arrives. We have top quality equipment, full stocks of salt and a highly trained and dedicated team of drivers and support staff who will do all they can to ensure that the community and business are kept on the move when bad weather hits - but I would remind all road users and pedestrians that they also have a responsibility to take care and to keep traffic moving by taking account of the conditions and by avoiding any unnecessary accidents caused by inappropriate driving or speed."

For safe winter driving advice, go to:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Usingmotorwaysandroads/>

GREATER CAMBRIDGE CITY DEAL WELCOMED BY COUNCIL

Council chiefs say a possible new City Deal with Government could bring massive benefits to the local economy and help keep more of the money generated from future growth within the local area. Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership have been invited by Government to enter into negotiations around a City Deal for the Greater Cambridge area. This means negotiations will start shortly with Government on how this could benefit Cambridge and the surrounding area.

A City Deal could see more funding and powers coming straight to the Cambridge city-region, putting more decisions into the hands of the local area, rather than Government.

It could see the three Councils working even more closely together on issues such as managing the major growth sites such as those on the fringes of Cambridge and the new town of Northstowe, and a more integrated approach to transport, strategic planning and skills. Government will be asked to consider allowing more funds that result from growth, such as taxes and business rates, to stay in Cambridgeshire and be reinvested to support infrastructure and enhance quality of life locally, rather than going to the Treasury as now. If a deal can be struck then Cambridge and the surrounding area could benefit from being able to make quicker and more joined up decisions aimed at boosting the local economy.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "I am pleased that Government has recognised the ambitious plans for growth in the Greater Cambridge area through inviting us to take part in the second wave of City Deal negotiations. This is an exciting opportunity for local councils to take advantage of the devolution of powers and funding streams from Government for the direct benefit of our communities across Cambridgeshire.

"I hope that through the City Deal more control will be put in the hands of local councils so that we can tackle issues such as housing, transport and other infrastructure that currently is a barrier to economic growth and prosperity. This will help secure more jobs, better quality of life for our residents and show we are open for business. We look forward to continuing the good work we are already carrying out with local councils and businesses as well as Government."

Cambridge and the South Cambridgeshire rural area surrounding it are the seat of world beating university education and research and the home of a unique cluster of leading edge technology businesses. It's already a proven economic success story. Our challenge is to create the conditions for the local economy to continue to grow and thrive, by addressing our housing shortage and transport problems while respecting the unique character of the area, which is very much part of the winning formula.

"The three local authorities with responsibility for the area already work together, but the possibility of additional powers from central government to help us is a real spur to try and take this to a new level and present a joint strategic lead across the boundaries that separate us."

Cllr Ray Manning, South Cambridgeshire District Council's Leader added: "Our plans for growth puts the area at the heart of driving the national economy forward, and we are pleased to see the Government has recognised our success as this deal could help us deliver real benefits for our residents and businesses. Putting more funding and power in the hands of local authorities mean we can work even closer together to make sure all aspects of housing and transport are considered together, while we also strive to create an environment that promotes the creation of more new jobs. We are very much looking forward to continuing our discussions with the other councils involved, and the Government, about the deal over to see how the best results can be achieved."

TIME TO CELEBRATE SCHOOL MEALS

School meals staff at Cambridgeshire County Council will be using National School Meals Week next week to promote the importance of healthy eating. County Council caterers, food service contractors, food manufacturers, suppliers and schools will be working together to encourage pupils to have a nutritious meal at lunchtime.

Throughout National School Meals Week (NSMW) - which runs from November 5 to 9 - Cambridgeshire Catering Services (CCS) will be promoting their new winter menu by encouraging pupils, parents and grandparents to try a school lunch. The celebrations of 2012 will continue in the classrooms of Pendragon Primary School in Papworth Everard, when the National School Meals Week Tour visits the school on Tuesday 6 November. Pupils will take part in the Get Celebrating theme by learning to bake cup cakes, decorating them and then using them to create the school's logo.

In the afternoon younger pupils will take part in a workshop about fruit and vegetables, where they will learn about different varieties, where they come from and when they are in season. In addition, every pupil and member of staff has been invited to take part in a celebration of school meals at lunchtime, with a traditional school lunch prepared by the CCS Primary School Caterer of the Year, Celia Griffiths.

Pendragon Primary School is also holding a writing week and has invited Arnold Fewell, organiser of NSMW and published author, to talk to pupils about how to write a blog. He will work with them to create the NSMW blog for the day that will be published on Wednesday morning at www.iloveschoolmeals.co.uk

CCS provides school meals to the majority of Cambridgeshire's primary schools, as well as schools in Peterborough, Essex, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. It supports the Change 4 Life campaign, whose objectives include developing healthier eating habits. More information about National School Meals Week and how it supports healthy eating can be found at www.iloveschoolmeals.co.uk.

ALL ABOARD FOR THE STATION CONSULTATION

Commuters, residents and businesses are to have their say on the proposed 'Cambridge Science Park' railway station from Monday 5 November Cambridgeshire County Council is holding a consultation until Friday 30 November for people to explain how they think the new station could change their travelling behaviour, how much they would use it and what sort of facilities they would like to see there. This will then be used to develop concepts of what the station, to be located in the Chesterton Sidings, would look like to ensure it meets the needs of future passengers and links with the surrounding area.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said "The Cambridge Science Park railway station is a very exciting project which will have a fantastic impact on the local economy. We have taken the bold decision to invest in this major infrastructure project rather than wait for anyone else to supply this because the benefits to all are obvious. Over the last few months we have been working very closely with Government to ensure the station will appear in future rail franchises to guarantee its usage.

"For me it is key we hear from the people who will use the station every day to ensure we effectively link train travel to one of Cambridge's main business areas, including the Science Park, St John's Innovation Centre and the Cambridge Business Park. It is vital this investment creates a transport hub which joins up with bus, pedestrian and cycling facilities. This will help East Cambridgeshire and the Fens connect with this part of Cambridge, as well as providing an important rapid link for the new Northstowe development. So please take the time to fill in the short consultation either at an event or online – your views are very important to us."

The station will be on the main line between Cambridge and Ely and will be served by direct trains running to London Kings Cross, Liverpool Street, Norwich and King's Lynn. As well as connecting into the national rail network, trains may also be available to Stansted Airport and Birmingham.

At present, facilities being proposed for the site include:

- an extension of the Busway from Milton Road to the station
- pedestrian and cycle access routes
- cycle parking for at least 1000 cycles
- a taxi drop-off and pick-up area
- a 450 space car park with disabled and short stay parking.

To fund the project Cambridgeshire County Council has decided to 'borrow to invest' the money. This means the train companies who will use the station will repay the Council through their contracts to run the trains.

Public consultations will be held at following times and places; For more details on the consultation go to www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/scienceparkstation

EXTRA SPECIAL CHILDREN NEED EXTRA SPECIAL FAMILIES

Cambridgeshire is supporting national Adoption Week's campaign to recruit more adoptive families in the county. Adoption Week is an annual event which begins on Monday 5 November. It aims to raise the profile of adoption and help find homes for the many looked after children in local authority care across the country who are currently waiting for an adoptive family. Organised by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), this year's theme is Rule yourself in to demonstrate that adopters can be of all ages and walks of life.

Adopters must be over 21, happy to make space in their life and home for a child, be patient, flexible and energetic, and determined to make a real difference to a child for a lifetime. There is no upper age limit for potential adopters. People from all ethnic origins and religions, disabled people can all apply to adopt. Those without children and those who are parents already, and homeowners or those in rented accommodation can all also apply.

To help find families for children who are waiting to be adopted, staff regularly invite all approved adopters to special events to discuss potential matches with these children. The next event will take place in Adoption Week. The adoption service will also be attending a national event where the details of local children waiting to be adopted will be introduced to potential adopters from around the country. The Adoption Register is also used to raise the profile of local children nationally.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "We believe every child has the right to a happy and stable family life. We have about 40 children of all ages waiting for an adoptive family. Most are white British, but there are also some children of black minority ethnicity and of Eastern European backgrounds.

"National Adoption Week is an important opportunity for us to draw attention to these local children and encourage more people to consider whether they could be the parent these children deserve.

"We know from existing adoptive families that it can be hard work to adopt, and our assessment programme is rigorous, but the rewards are huge. This is a chance to transform a child's life forever.

Get Cambridgeshire connected - Register here to day
www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk <http://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk>

It only takes a minute and will show the demand for better broadband.



SUPERFAST CAMPAIGN CALLS FOR SURGE OF SUPPORT IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The superfast campaign for better broadband across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is calling for a surge of support to show record levels of demand in the closing stages of registrations. Connecting Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing broadband campaigns in the country and has already reached a milestone of 20,000 registrations.

Households and businesses are being urged to demonstrate there is countywide demand for better broadband by registering for the campaign at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk before the end of December, when a supplier will be selected.

More than 80 Broadband Champions are helping villages and parishes with the final push for local support, as well as gathering examples of how communities and home-based businesses will benefit from being able to access better broadband.

The complex bidding process is on track to select the supplier able to make the maximum investment in rolling out superfast broadband (min. 25Mbps) to at least 90% of homes and businesses with better broadband (min 2 Mbps) for all other premises in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2015. Planning for the roll-out will begin in January 2013, but it is too early to say which areas will benefit first.

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council as well as the Government body Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) have together committed up to £30 million for the Connecting Cambridgeshire project to bring better broadband access to as many places as possible.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "We need everyone to support this registration campaign so the whole county can benefit from better broadband. Reliable internet access is becoming part of everyday life in our homes, schools, health and public services, and it is vital for our businesses and economy to thrive. We are getting close to selecting the supplier to roll-out superfast broadband across Cambridgeshire and we are determined to get the best investment we can to improve connectivity for all."

Councillor Nick Wright, South Cambridgeshire District Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "Residents and businesses have already shown impressive support for this campaign, but if you are yet to log on and sign up please make sure you take the time to do so before the end of the year. Slow broadband access is a constant frustration in rural areas of South Cambridgeshire and every registration helps to bring better broadband a step closer for communities."

People who cannot register online at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk, can pick up a Freepost reply form in leaflets and flyers widely available in libraries and council offices. Anyone interested in helping with the campaign in their area, can email contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk for more information.

SUNSHINE HARVEST AT COUNCIL OFFICES

Solar panels have been installed on Cambridgeshire County Council's Hereward Hall in March. This installation is part of a wider initiative to invest in the future by reducing overall operating costs and creating additional revenue schemes. The Council has already installed panels at 20 sites across the County Farms Estate which can generate a total power of 232kW and many schools across Cambridgeshire have also introduced small solar installations.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said "Solar panels will of course help us to reduce our carbon footprint but a key driver of this installation has been investing in efficiency. By using renewable energy to generate electricity we will save money on our bills in the long term - and help to make our electricity supply more resilient to price changes."

Based on the projected electricity generation from the 12.74kWp of panels (kWp that means the total amount of power that can be created by the panels), and the income from the Feed-in tariff, a government initiative to encourage the take up of renewable energy, the panels should pay for themselves within about 7 years. The Government's Feed-in Tariff incentive scheme means that there is a guaranteed price for each unit of electricity generated at Hereward Hall for 20 years.

WORKING TO DEVELOP A LASTING LEGACY

Councillors from all parties have agreed to work to ensure the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games benefits residents throughout Cambridgeshire. A motion from Cllr Martin Curtis to the Council at Cambridgeshire County Council asked:

This Council congratulates all those who were involved with the success of the Olympics and Paralympics from the athletes and their support teams to the Gamesmakers and volunteers to the public who became part of the spirit of London 2012.

The Council also recognises the success with which Cambridgeshire grasped the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented by the Games, ensuring that our communities were able to be part of something very special. From the torch/lantern relays and activities building up to the Games, to the events themselves, people across our county have enjoyed playing their role in Great Britain's glory at the greatest sporting event in the world.

The challenge ahead of us all is to not let the enthusiasm and joy which the Olympics sparked to die - this week our athletes, Torchbearers and Gamesmakers will be celebrated at five schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough where they will talk to students about their summer. The Council asks all members to work to ensure the legacy of the Olympics continues through all our actions in the months and years to come.

Councillor Martin Curtis, Lead Member for Olympic and Paralympic legacy at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "The feelings and emotions we all went through during the spectacular summer of sport should never be forgotten. The performances of all the athletes have inspired all of us to take up a sport, volunteer at a local club or simply cycle instead of drive to work. This wave of good will cannot and should not be ignored. This is why I was so pleased to see the unanimous support my motion received at the Council meeting today. By all working together we can make a real difference and harness this once in a lifetime opportunity to make good on the promises which were made before, during and after the Games. I promise over the next few months we will work hard with all our partners to make sure the enthusiasm of the summer does not die."

COUNTY COUNCIL LEADS THE WAY IN THE SHOW US YOU CARE CAMPAIGN

Council leaders are helping to lead a campaign calling on the Government to address the crisis in funding elderly care which threatens the council's ability to fund key services.

The rising cost of providing care and support to a rapidly growing ageing population, combined with the growing cost of delivering other statutory responsibilities like social services and concessionary travel, will soak up almost all of council spending.

The figures, based on conservative estimates, show that unless the funding crisis is addressed, a £153 million funding shortfall will exist by 2017-18 between current estimates of the amount of money available to Cambridgeshire County Council to provide its full range of services and the predicted cost of maintaining them at the levels wanted. Core funding from Government has reduced from £140 million for 2010/11 to £107 million for 2012/13, with further reductions expected.

The analysis is part of a wider report by the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents 373 councils in England and Wales. It warns that in order to manage a £16.5 billion shortfall that councils across the country may face by the end of the decade, funding for many service areas may have to reduce significantly.

Cambridgeshire County Council is joining forces with the LGA and calling on the Government to ensure local authorities are not placed in that position by providing adequate funding to support adult social care services and giving councils access to the resources needed to deliver the services expected of them by local residents.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said "The 28 per cent cut in the amount of money councils receive from central Government between 2010/11 and 2014/15 has contributed considerably to this situation. We're calling on the Government to do more, otherwise all our residents will suffer as a consequence as we look at other council services in order to address the crisis in adult social care funding. We need an immediate injection of money into the adult care system to meet rising demand in the short term, alongside a major revision of the way it is paid for and delivered in future. "

"We're looking at a potential gap of £2.9 million between the money available for providing adult social care services and the predicted cost of maintaining them in 2012/13 - and this will continue to widen as the years go on. We are working hard to deliver services that promote good health and positive wellbeing to help to reduce the increasing demand, whilst maintaining personal dignity and providing value for money for the county's tax payers. But this will not be enough, the Government need to act now to address this situation for the benefit of all of our residents. "

Residents are also encouraged to join in the campaign, go to www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/showusyoucare

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